

with the Author's last wishes

INTRODUCTORY LECTURE,

DELIVERED IN

THE THEATRE

OF THE

ROYAL COLLEGE OF SURGEONS,

ON TUESDAY, THE 9TH OF APRIL, 1833.

BY

HENRY EARLE, F.R.S.,

PROFESSOR OF ANATOMY AND SURGERY TO THE COLLEGE,

&c. &c. &c.

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TO
JOHN PAINTER VINCENT, Esq.
PRESIDENT,
AND TO
THE OTHER MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL
OF THE
Royal College of Surgeons,
IN LONDON,
THIS LECTURE

IS RESPECTFULLY INSCRIBED

BY

THEIR OBEDIENT SERVANT,

HENRY EARLE.

28, *George Street.*
April 26, 1833.



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INTRODUCTORY LECTURE.

MR. PRESIDENT, AND GENTLEMEN :

WHEN I look back to the many distinguished and highly-talented individuals, who have successively filled this chair—I cannot, indeed, but feel gratified by the honour which has been conferred on me by the Council of this College; but, at the same time, it would be presumptuous in me not to be most sensible of the numerous difficulties which I shall have to encounter, in endeavouring to fulfil the duties which have been assigned to me.

It is not only a comparison with those able professors who have preceded me that I have to apprehend, but also the circumstance of my being unaccustomed to the office of public lecturer, while *all* who have hitherto been promoted to this office have been experienced teachers, long accustomed to address large assemblies, and long trained to those habits of order and arrangement, which constitute the chief qualifications of a clear and instructive lecturer. There is yet another point, on

which I feel it incumbent on me thus early to claim your indulgence. During the whole period of my professional education, that stupendous power which long ruled over the destinies of Europe, so effectually debarred all the inhabitants of this country from holding any intercourse with their continental neighbours, that it was scarcely possible, even for those engaged in the purest scientific pursuits to gain admittance within the proscribed limits. Thus, the justly-celebrated schools of France, of Italy, and of Germany, which many whom I now have the honour to address have had opportunities of visiting, with sufficient leisure to enable them to derive much, and most valuable information, were entirely closed to the British student, during the only period when I could have profited by them.

Nor was this the only disadvantage under which our students then laboured. The same barbarous decrees which forbade our approach, opposed the utmost difficulty to the free circulation of the literature of the age, which rendered the possession of foreign professional works accessible only to a few. It was, indeed, in those days that we might with truth have called ourselves, "*penitus toto divisos orbe Britannos*," for such, at least, was our situation with regard to that portion of the civilized globe, with which it was most desirable to

have intercourse. It was also during this fettered state of science, that the active part of my professional career commenced—a period which so often stamps and gives a character to after-life.

I trust, that I shall not incur the charge of egotism, in bringing forward this statement; or even in venturing to trespass yet a short time on your patience, in making you further conversant with the nature of the education, and pursuits of one, with whom many of you may be little, if it all, acquainted. Such an introduction may be equally desirable to us all.—As an act of justice to myself, that more may not be required of me than I can reasonably be expected to perform, and to enable such gentlemen as, after hearing these premises, may be disposed to listen to me, to form a juster estimate of how far I have availed myself of those opportunities which have been afforded me.

It is, I conceive, always desirable, before we enter on any new country, to obtain some chart of the principal roads and places we are about to visit, and still more desirable to form some acquaintance with those who are to be our fellow-travellers. I shall, therefore, endeavour as briefly as possible to supply these desiderata.

From the commencement of my professional career to the present moment, St. Bartholomew's Hospital has been the almost exclusive field of

my labours. It was in that school that the great book of Nature was first unfolded to my view; and there I have, with scarcely any interval of time, continued to peruse and study her pages. From being called upon at a very early period to perform the actual duties of attending and ministering to the sick, my mind naturally inclined to the practice rather than to the theory of my profession. The number of students being at that time limited, the almost exclusive attendance on one third of the surgical patients often devolved on me for months together, affording such constant occupation as to compel me to neglect the more regular attendance on the schools. Whether such circumstances were beneficial or otherwise, it is not for me to say; what I gained in the actual knowledge of disease, and the confidence I acquired in the treatment of surgical cases, were at the expense of much valuable information which I might have reaped from the able professors who then filled the various chairs in this metropolis. I mention this fact as affording some apology for the want of that order and arrangement, which those who have been accustomed to listen to the best lecturers, and more practised in delivering lectures themselves, no doubt possess in a much higher degree.

The period of tuition was scarcely closed, when I

was intrusted with the important situation of surgeon to the Foundling; and the declining years of my respected Parent called upon me to render him every assistance in my power in the performance of his public and private engagements. After a short interval, I had the honour of being permanently appointed one of the surgeons of St. Bartholomew's Hospital. Thus I found that my professional chains bound me more and more closely every year to this metropolis, and especially limited the sphere of my activity to that noble institution to which I shall ever look up with filial love and gratitude, as the principal source of all that has most contributed to my happiness and success in life. I have only to regret that opportunity was thus denied me of sufficient leisure to enable me to form a just estimate of the labours of our continental brethren, by a personal inspection of their various institutions. I have only been able to make one short visit to the schools of Paris alone. It follows, gentlemen, from the above statement, that nearly all which I have to offer of professional information is drawn from one principal source. But at the same time it is right to state that that source has been one of vast extent, and that the facilities afforded, through the liberality and munificence of the Directors and Governors of St. Bartholomew's, are such, that if I have not gained much valuable

information, the fault must necessarily rest with myself.

The fruits of the experience which I have thus enjoyed, I have from time to time put forth in various essays published in different periodical works, particularly in the Transactions of the Medico-Chirurgical Society, and I hope, in the course of the following lectures, to offer some additional practical observations, which, as they are the result of experience, will, I trust, be found not altogether undeserving of attention.

I am well aware that for want of a more extended intercourse with other schools, both in this country and on the continent, I may have received a strong bias in favour of particular plans with which I have been familiar from my boyhood, and that I may not be able to do justice to many of my fellow-labourers, although I have endeavoured, as much as possible, to counteract such bias, by affording every facility in my power for trying whatever appeared to be deserving of trial, not indeed seeking after novelties, because they were such, but endeavouring to correct and supply deficiencies by adopting that which experience proved to be worthy of credit. To those gentlemen who, after this statement, may be disposed to listen to the results afforded by twenty-eight years, spent principally within the walls of St. Bartholomew's, I pledge myself to give a faith-

ful narrative of the experience which I have gained, at the same time avowing myself quite open to conviction, should the doctrines which I shall teach be considered as erroneous, and most desirous of eradicating any unjust prejudices which may have insensibly influenced my conduct.

There are yet other difficulties to which I may allude, and which must have been equally felt by my predecessors, arising from the nature and limits of the prescribed course of lectures, and the mixed audience whom I have the honour to address; composed as it is of three distinct classes, of those seniors in the profession, whose experience entitles them to impart, rather than to receive instruction; of those who have completed their education, and are now actively engaged in the pursuit of their profession, to whom it must be more or less a sacrifice to devote their time to an attendance in this theatre, and who have therefore a right to expect more solid and condensed information than can be conveyed in such didactic discourses as would perhaps be best adapted to the third class of my audience, whose period of probationary education is not yet completed.

With a mind thus sensible to the numerous difficulties which surround me, it may be a matter of surprise that I should not have shrunk from the allotted task. Certainly, if I had consulted my

own ease and comfort, I should have retired in favour of some one more competent; but I felt that I had a duty to perform towards those members of the Council, who had done me the honour to nominate me to this distinguished situation; towards my professional brethren, who, engaged like myself, in the pursuit and acquisition of knowledge, are entitled to whatever information it may be in my power to add to the common stock; and towards the public, from whom I have received a large share of confidence and support.—My conscience also told me, that having been for many years placed in the responsible situation of surgeon to one of the noblest charities of which this country can boast, I might with justice be considered a most unprofitable servant if I had not gleaned some information and collected some facts worthy of being recorded; if I had not established some principles founded on experience, which might serve to assist and guide those who had not enjoyed similar privileges. Such, gentlemen, were the considerations which induced me to grapple with the difficulties which presented themselves, and to undertake the office upon which I am now entering, certainly with feelings of unaffected humility, and distrust of my powers of conveying information; but not without some hope, and the most heartfelt desire to prove myself useful in my generation. In this under-

taking I am cheered by the confidence which I feel, of meeting with that liberality of sentiment from an enlightened audience, which they never fail to bestow on one who honestly endeavours to perform his duty; and I am further encouraged by the assurance of the cordial co-operation of those gentlemen, whose valuable services have been long devoted to arranging and methodizing the splendid collection contained within these walls, and to furthering the great objects of this College, the promotion and diffusion of surgical knowledge.

And here, perhaps, I may be indulged for a few moments, in endeavouring to express the deep sense which I entertain of the loss which all, who are interested in this splendid and unrivalled collection, have sustained in the melancholy bereavement with which it has pleased the Almighty to afflict our worthy and indefatigable Conservator; a loss which no one can more truly estimate than the person appointed to fill this chair. Brought up from his earliest childhood within these walls, and gradually trained by the fostering hand of his gifted father, Mr. W. Clift was possessed of a more intimate acquaintance with the various riches contained in this vast mine of intellectual wealth, than almost any other individual could be expected to have acquired. His very existence may be said to have been intimately connected with this College, to the service of which

he directed all his energies, and had devoted the best years of his life. It is not only the loss of that fund of valuable information respecting the contents of this Museum, which now lies buried with the object of our present regret, that we have to deplore, but the further privation of the great assistance he rendered to science by his skill in that creative art, which gives form to thought. Few, very few, possess such powers of delineating with fidelity the various appearances exhibited in healthy and morbid structure, as Mr. W. Clift did, because very few are so well acquainted with the nature of those appearances, and so immediately aware of those points more particularly requiring to be illustrated; added to which, he ever evinced the greatest readiness, and the happiest facility, in executing plans and diagrams for the different gentlemen who have filled this chair. The loss we have sustained in this important department will be long felt by the present and future professors.

Of his private worth and virtues I might speak on the testimony of many now present, but I will only add that I have been informed, that in addition to his professional acquirements, he possessed considerable taste for the polite arts; that he was warm and steady in his friendships; zealous and active in the performance of his public duties; and affectionate and obedient to his parents. Let it

afford them some consolation under their present affliction, that though prematurely stopped in life's career, he had accomplished much which will live after him, and had obtained the regard and esteem of all who were acquainted with him. “*Multis ille bonis flebilis occidit.*”

According to the ordinances of the Board of Curators, it is required that six of the lectures about to be delivered should be on Human Anatomy, and nine on Surgery. In seeking for an appropriate subject for these lectures, I have been desirous of selecting one on which the immortal founder of this museum had bestowed much attention, and which he had illustrated by numerous specimens of diseased and healthy structure; I have been at the same time influenced in my choice, by the quantity of original and practical information which I could bring to bear upon the subject. The diseases of the urinary and genital organs appear to have occupied a considerable portion of Mr. Hunter's time and attention. They constitute a class of diseases, perhaps, the most important and interesting that occur in the whole range of surgical science, from the number and complexity of morbid affections to which these organs are liable, and the various and difficult operations which are required for their alleviation and cure. Certainly there are no diseases in which the welfare

and happiness of the patient, and the success and reputation of the practitioner are more closely and inseparably united. For the proper understanding of the various morbid affections of these complicated organs, and the successful treatment of them, it is not only indispensable that the practitioner should possess an accurate knowledge of their minute structure, and anatomical relations; combined with the utmost delicacy of manipulation in the employment of different instruments, and much firmness and dexterity in the performance of operations:—he ought likewise to possess a knowledge of the chemical composition of the urine, and be accustomed to examine its healthy and morbid conditions, and to be alive to all the various circumstances which influence this secretion, and acquainted with the operation of the various remedial means capable of controlling or alleviating any prevailing diathesis. He should above all things be an accurate observer of symptoms and facts, and possess much discrimination in tracing the connexion of cause and effect, which are often far removed from each other in the earlier stages of disease, when most good is to be effected, although, when the whole chain of evils is completed, the connecting links are perhaps more distinctly visible in this class, than in most other diseases to which we are liable.

It is my intention, in the following Lectures, to give such an anatomical description of the whole urinary apparatus, as will call to mind those circumstances of natural structure and relative situation, which will render the latter or practical parts of the course more intelligible. The latter will thus be based upon the former, and the whole will constitute one connected course. It can hardly be expected, in the present improved state of anatomical knowledge, that persons holding this honourable and responsible office should bring forward many new facts, or even advance new doctrines founded on data already obtained. Such conditions it would hardly be possible for any professor to comply with—certainly not the humble individual who now addresses you.

There are however, some disputed points respecting the minute structure of the kidney, on which I hope to be able to throw some light. The natural structure and functions of the bladder, and its relation to surrounding parts, I shall venture to dwell upon, particularly with reference to the various operations for puncturing that viscus and for destroying in, or removing calculi from its cavity. The changes produced by the different morbid affections to which the bladder and its appendages are liable will also come under review, and the phenomena presented by certain malformations will be submitted

to you. On the minute structure of the different parts of the urethra I shall have occasion to dwell, as I consider every circumstance connected with this canal, as especially claiming the attention of the surgeon. And here I shall venture to advance some opinions relative to the anatomical structure, and physiology of this part, which I believe to be new, and which will tend much to reconcile the discrepancies which still exist respecting the probable muscularity or simple elastic property of this canal. These subjects will, I conceive, sufficiently occupy that division of the course which will be allotted to anatomical description.

In filling up this sketch, I shall endeavour to direct your attention principally to those points which are of practical importance, and which will bear a close relation to the surgical observations which will follow. This appears to me, to be one principal object, in the division which has been established in this course of lectures, not to give minute anatomical demonstrations, which would be ill-adapted to such an audience, but, to revive from time to time the recollection of those more important and practical anatomical facts, which have a relation to the subsequent discourses. With respect to the second division of the course, I conceive it to be principally useful in the opportunity which it affords, to those who have had ample

scope for observation, of submitting the result of their labours to the ordeal of public opinion, when their principles will either be confirmed, or their errors refuted, by the enlightened assembly to whom they are addressed.

In this part of the course I shall take into consideration the numerous class of diseases, to which the urinary organs are liable. The various operations for lithotomy, and their comparative merits, will be discussed, and the more modern practice of lithotripsy will be dispassionately reviewed. The diseases of the urethra and prostate gland, and the numerous and most serious consequences of these affections, will form an important part of the course, which will be illustrated by numerous valuable preparations contained in this museum.

Some of the opinions which I may have occasion to offer, may not perhaps accord with those entertained by some of the seniors of the profession, who may honour me with their presence. To the generality of mankind it must always be a hard task to abandon opinions consecrated by time, “*et quæ imberbes didicere senes perdenda fateri* ;” but, I feel assured that those respected individuals whom I now address, are fully impressed with the progressive nature of our profession, and that they will receive without prejudice whatever arguments shall

appear consistent with common sense, or verified by facts.

Those gentlemen who, like myself, are more actively engaged in the pursuit of their profession, I may venture with greater boldness to address, and to request that they will submit those doctrines to the test of experience, which may appear to them worthy of credit.

Having trespassed too far into the hour allotted for this lecture, to be able now to enter upon the subject of this course, I shall crave permission to take a brief retrospective view of some of the principal circumstances, which appear to me to have contributed to the improvements in surgical science during the last quarter of a century; and at the same time, I shall venture to offer a few observations on those circumstances at present in operation, which, I conceive, are calculated to advance or retard its future progress.

At the period when I commenced my professional career, the seeds sown by Mr. Hunter were coming fast to maturity. His philosophical explanations of the phenomena of inflammation, and the laws which regulate healthy and morbid actions, in the various tissues of which the body is composed, were studied with avidity and assiduity: and a spirit of inquiry, and accurate investigation

was roused, which for many successive years gave birth to works of sterling merit, containing the results of much laborious research, and patient accumulation of facts.

The highly interesting and philosophical works of Bichat, who cultivated the same field of inquiry as John Hunter, contributed greatly to the simplification and scientific arrangement of diseases, which forms so striking a characteristic of modern surgery.

The study of the simple elementary tissues, and the laws which regulate them in health and disease, formed the great basis on which the superstructure of modern surgery has been raised.

It was my good fortune to be placed under a master, who may be truly said to have received the falling mantle of Hunter, which lost none of its splendour during the many years which he wore it, and which so often adorned him in this theatre. It was not, however, alone, in illustrating, explaining, and extending the doctrines of Hunter, that Mr. Abernethy contributed to the present advanced state of surgery, but by directing the attention of his brethren to the constitutional treatment of local diseases. His labours in this department, by which he so much raised the character and reputation of British surgery, are beyond all praise.

I have said, it was my good fortune to be placed under this able expositor of Hunter's doctrines ; it was not less my good fortune to be associated with a knot of most intelligent and inquiring students, many of whom are now filling the most honourable stations in society, and are extending and diffusing the knowledge which they then acquired. The pages of the Transactions of the Medico-chirurgical Society, which for many years stood pre-eminent in this country, bear ample testimony to the extent and importance of their labours.

In looking back to the state of medical education in those days, it must be confessed, that the student received but little assistance from lecturers, who were very scanty, compared with the numerous professors of modern days ; and that clinical instruction was altogether neglected.—The surgical aspirant was almost left to his own resources ; but this very circumstance, perhaps, led to his investigating more closely the phenomena of disease, to his accumulating original facts and observations, and in many instances to his arranging and compiling the results of his own labours for the improvement and benefit of his professional brethren and the world at large.

Of late years a vast change has been effected in this respect, and the business of education, if I may use such an expression, has been greatly encreased ;

every possible facility is now given to the student by professors in every department of medical science, and a course of preliminary studies is laid down and enforced by the different corporate bodies intrusted with the direction of professional education. Much good already has been, and I hope will continue to be, the result of these regulations; but, Sir, I trust I shall be forgiven if I express my honest conviction, that tares have sprung up with the wheat.

It may be, that I am a prejudiced observer, and that the practical education which I have myself received may have led me to set too much store by such means of information; but I cannot avoid expressing my conviction, that we are now running too much into the opposite extreme, and relying too much on oral instruction, to the neglect of actual observation and experience, which can alone be obtained by a careful investigation of diseases at the bed-side of the patient.

I trust, that I shall not be misunderstood in making these observations, and that it will not be supposed that I undervalue the sound principles of medical knowledge which are taught in the different schools. It must, however, be confessed, that it is a common failing with most popular lecturers to present only the fair side of the picture. To draw such plain and broad distinctions between

different morbid actions, and to adapt so accurately the various curative means to each, that an impression is left on the mind of the auditor, that he will be able readily to discriminate between the innumerable diseases that shall present themselves, and with equal facility be enabled to combat them successfully. How much must such a person be at a loss when left to himself to judge and act! Distrust of himself, disgust and disappointment must inevitably follow.

The nature and extent of the studies, and the number of lectures now prescribed to the student must necessarily occupy so large a proportion of the very limited period of time ordinarily devoted to the acquisition of professional education, that he can ill afford leisure for the more important task of collecting and arranging facts for himself. This, if it has not already, will I fear tend to retard the future advancement of knowledge. I am aware, that it is much easier to object to any existing arrangement than to suggest any improvement, and I am equally aware, that the present improved state of medical science, requires a student to be initiated in the various branches which are now taught, and with which he is expected to be acquainted. I cannot, however, but regret that this should be at the expense of practical information, and that the student is now often

compelled to attend lectures to the neglect of those opportunities for observation, which he may *never* again enjoy. I would venture to hope, that some branches of medical education, which is now confined to the short days of winter, may be hereafter extended over the comparatively unoccupied months of summer.

It is true that anatomy, the great foundation of all medical knowledge is most advantageously pursued during the winter season; but, at the same time, it cannot be denied that many of the courses of lectures now crowded together during the same period, might with equal, if not greater facility be delivered during the summer season.

In venturing to suggest such an alteration in the present long established custom, allow me Sir to express my sincere and ardent wish, that hereafter, there may exist a more cordial co-operation between the ruling powers, intrusted with the regulation and education of the medical schools in this metropolis. That the curriculum ~~presented~~ by each *crub* may be such, as to afford mutual advantages and accommodation to all engaged in the different departments of medicine; that each may be, henceforth, rivals only in their endeavours to promote the advancement of knowledge in the different branches of science over which each is more particularly appointed to superintend; and thus, to

extend the sphere, and raise the dignity of a profession which yields the palm to none, either in point of utility or the nobleness of the ends to which it is directed. “*Quid enim tam regium, tam liberale, tam munificum, quam opem ferre supplicibus, excitare afflictos, dare salutem.*”

There is yet another evil of modern growth, which as it is obviously increasing, I shall venture to allude to.

A vast effort has of late years been made for the general diffusion of knowledge, and for the education and improvement of mankind. Many excellent and truly philanthropic men have engaged in this great design, and have generously devoted a large portion of their valuable time to promoting this object. It is to be hoped that much good will result from this experiment, and that the human race will be hereafter wiser and better for their exertions.

One principal mode of accomplishing this, has been the publication of weekly papers, at so low a price, as to be within the reach of almost every person.

A somewhat similar experiment has of late years been tried in our profession, and the press has teemed with manuals and weekly publications, professing to give accurate records of passing events, and faithful details of hospital practice, and afford-

ing ready vehicles for the communication of every new and useful discovery. Such publications, at first sight, may appear eminently calculated to promote the ends of science, and it is not to be denied, that they have been to a certain extent useful; especially to those, who being far removed from the seats of learning, may have no other modes of gaining information.—But though, through their means, the stream of knowledge may have become wider, it has not always become deeper or more fructifying as it flowed.

It must be confessed, that with this cheap and condensed knowledge, a taste has of late years sprung up which is very unfavourable to severe and persevering study.

It is true, that the medical press has of late years put forth numerous systems, manuals and abridgements, many of them excellent in their kind, and conveying knowledge easily, simply, and compendiously: but certainly neither exercising the powers of the mind so effectually, nor affording that wholesome discipline for the reasoning powers which attends the perusal of the original authors, from whose works they are compiled. Finding themselves without time, and perhaps, not feeling any great inclination to embrace the vast field of knowledge now expanded before them; the majority of medical students, give up profound and systematic

study in despair; and betake themselves to works of a subordinate character, which furnish them with what information they immediately want, or which present science in a ready and familiar form. However convenient this sort of reading may be, it has little tendency to strengthen and enlarge the understanding. A person becomes a mere walking dictionary, unless the acquisition of knowledge has been accompanied by the exertion of his own faculties, by which alone, it can be turned to profit. Within certain limits, and under proper management, periodicals are well qualified to promote information and inquiry; and are especially useful in conveying information and refreshing the memories of those who are in distant parts, and removed from any original source of knowledge; but, when they become excessive in number, intemperate and overbearing in their language, and support one side of a cause and oppose another, merely to serve the purposes of party or the interests of individuals, they are among the most formidable adversaries to sound judgment and literature. Yet, it is to be feared that the desultory, defective, and often erroneous intelligence conveyed through these publications, constitutes half the stock of knowledge of a considerable portion of the rising generation.

I have thought it my duty to offer these obser-

vations, which are more particularly addressed to the younger part of my audience, to put them on their guard against an evil which daily experience convinces me is taking deeper root in this country, and which is calculated to produce a very baneful effect on the future progress of medical science.— This apparently easy mode of acquiring information may be very alluring, but it tends to paralyse the nobler efforts of the mind. It may appear to supersede the more difficult task of thinking and acting for yourselves; but knowledge, thus easily acquired can make no deep impression, and is soon forgotten. “*Nihil tam utile est quod in transitu prosit,*” was the terse remark of Seneca on all such desultory reading.

Another evil, which has undoubtedly arisen from the too great extension of ephemeral productions, has been the neglect of that patient accumulation of facts, which can alone furnish materials for more enlarged and scientific views.

It is now quite notorious, that since the weekly publication of every isolated case, the recollection of which is speedily banished from the reader's mind by the next which succeeds, on some totally different subject; very few works of sterling merit have been published, and even the transactions of public societies have greatly fallen off both in interest and extent.

Having so far presumed to take upon myself the office of censor, may I, Sir, be permitted to trespass yet a little on your time, and having pointed out some of the evils to be avoided, may I be allowed to avail myself of the present opportunity of offering a few words of encouragement and advice to the younger parts of my audience.

Let me exhort you my young friends, to consider well the high importance of the career on which you are entering, and the sacred nature of the trust which you are solicitous of undertaking.—Fair Science is opening to you all her stores of honour and usefulness, which will repay you ten-fold for whatever labour you may bestow in investigating her laws.

At every period of life, the acquisition of knowledge is one of the most pleasing employments of the human mind, and affords the most permanent gratification ; but in youth there are circumstances which make it productive of the highest enjoyment. It is then, that every thing has the charm of novelty, that curiosity and fancy are awake, and the heart swells with the anticipation of future eminence and honours. It is then that the mind renders the most ample harvest to the degree of cultivation bestowed on it. That the memory is most retentive, and the facts presented to our observation leave the most indelible impressions.

Diligence, industry, and the proper employment of time, are the material duties of the young. To little purpose are we endowed with the best abilities, if we want activity for exerting them. In youth the habits of industry are most easily acquired ; in youth the incentives to it are strongest, from ambition and from duty, from emulation and hope ; from all the prospects which the beginning of life affords.

The disposition which best befits a young man about to engage in a life of study, is patience in inquiry, eagerness for knowledge, and willingness to be instructed ; a due submission to superior abilities and longer experience, and a ready obedience to those from whom he is to expect the removal of his ignorance and the resolution of his doubts. That submission to authority and that reverence for instruction which so well becomes every man at his first entrance upon new regions of learning ; that willingness to receive implicitly, what further advances only can enable him to appreciate, are very little to be expected from one who looks down with scorn upon his teacher, and who is more apt to censure the obscurity of precepts, than to suspect the force of his own understanding. Knowledge is to be attained by slow and gradual acquisition, by a careful review of our ideas, and a regular superstructure of one proposi-

tion on another, and is therefore the reward only of diligence and patience. But patience is the offspring of modesty. Superficial knowledge acquired without labour, or *gleaned from the industry of others*, too often engenders conceit and arrogance, which require the correcting hand of time to humble them. Full of their own imaginary excellence, such persons deride the more cautious and hesitating opinions of experience, as the timorous suggestions of age or ignorance. The pride of such acquirements affects to despise what it cannot understand, and is more solicitous to display than to increase its acquisitions. It endeavours by the glitter and tinsel of pretension, to gain a certain degree of celebrity to supply the place of knowledge, rather than by the acquisition of real knowledge to attain more lasting fame.

I trust that it is hardly necessary for me to offer many observations on the importance of husbanding most carefully the very limited time usually allotted for the period of education. That you all bear in mind that

“ The spirit walks of every day deceased,
And smiles an angel or a fury frowns.”

That you are all fully sensible of the high value of the present moment, and consider yourselves responsible for its good or ill employment, not only to the great Being who created you, but likewise to

those earthly parents, whose prayers are following you when perhaps you are least conscious of them.

To those articled students, who are looking forward to fill the important situations of Hospital surgeons and professors, and from whom succeeding generations may be expected to receive instructions, it may be well to address a few additional observations.

From the superior advantages possessed by these gentlemen, and the longer period of time which they are enabled to devote to their education, much more will certainly and most reasonably be expected. Let me warn them however not to rely too much on the more protracted time allotted to them, "*fugaces labuntur anni.*" Let them never defer till to-morrow what they can execute to-day. To imagine that they have yet time enough before them is a most dangerous and fallacious sentiment.

There is another danger to which those who are very early initiated in our profession, and are allowed considerable time for its acquirement, are exposed. They may commence their career with most praiseworthy zeal and ardour, and obtain considerable credit, and may even acquire much useful information; but let them not rest satisfied with such advancement towards the goal. In our profession so much yet remains to be accomplished

that we must be ever learners. The entire life of such scholars ought to be devoted to the accumulation and diffusion of knowledge. In this progressing age, they must themselves continue to learn, in order that they may be qualified to teach those who may have less time or opportunity or abilities for improvement. As it must be obvious that no man can teach what he has never learned, the value and usefulness of the latter part of life must depend in a great measure upon the proper application of the earlier years, and he that neglects the improvement of his own mind will never be enabled to instruct others. Light must first be received by that body from which light is to be reflected. I venture to make these observations, because it occasionally happens with young men, that the early promise of excellence ends in bitter disappointment, and that in proportion as greater advances have been made in the first period of life, there is less diligence in the second; and as was said of the ancient Gauls, that they were more than men on the onset, but less than women in the conflict; it may be said with respect to education that some who are men at school are boys in after life. Their ardour remits, their diligence relaxes, and they give themselves up with much self-complacency to the contemplation of their comparative excellence, without considering that the march of

science is hourly rendering such comparison less advantageous to them, and that the acquisitions of which they boast are hourly mouldering away.

Having now enumerated and pointed out many of the quicksands which surround you in the career which you have chosen, let me present to you the more cheering prospect afforded by the daily increasing facilities which are given to the acquisition of real knowledge; and first let me congratulate you on the brighter dawn which has already opened on the study of anatomy, which is now stript of its most revolting characters, and is no longer subject to those penal enactments so long the disgrace of this country. The supply of a sufficient number of fresh subjects, which every year will probably increase, as prejudices die away, cannot fail to be most advantageous to the rising generation, and will, it is to be hoped, hereafter place our schools in this most important respect on a par with those of our continental brethren;—the mention of whom leads me to enumerate among the great advantages possessed by modern students, the facility with which every part of Europe may now be visited. Many of our more advanced students have availed themselves of these opportunities, and have returned enriched with much valuable information, and especially with an ardour for minute pathological investigation, which it is to

be hoped they will be the means of extensively diffusing in this country.

In addition to the above advantages and incentives to study, let me mention the generous emulation now existing between the numerous elementary schools which have sprung up not only in London, but in various parts of the country, and the appointment of many able professors to aid and assist in smoothing the more rugged paths in almost every branch of science.

And lastly, though by no means the least in importance, let me advert to the facilities of access now granted to the profession in this metropolis, to the great and unrivalled museum contained within these walls, and the splendid and increasing library which has of late years been added to the College. All these are circumstances to which we may look with an honest pride, and which we have a right to expect will eventually lead to the further advancement of a science whose great and ultimate objects should be Truth and the alleviation of human misery.

There is yet another subject to which in the character of monitor which I have ventured to assume, I feel it my bounden duty to advert ; a subject of the utmost importance to your present and future happiness. It is not uncommon in society to hear the stigma of infidelity thrown

upon our profession. I confidently believe that such stigma is as unmerited, as it would be damning if it were true; I am proud to reckon among my intimate friends and associates, many who are as stedfast in their religious duties and observances, as they are upright and honorable in their professional avocations. It is indeed hardly possible to conceive how this stigma should have been so generally applied to a profession, in the study and exercise of which we have such perpetual remembrances of the wisdom and beneficence of our Creator. In the study of anatomy is there any part of the structure of the human body which does not evince the greatest wisdom and design? Are there any functions of any of the organs of the body, where we imagine we can penetrate the designs of Providence, that do not call forth our admiration and gratitude? In the exercise of our profession, have we not daily the best opportunities of witnessing the all-powerful influence of Christianity, in enabling persons to endure the lingering tortures of disease with patient resignation, and in fortifying even the most delicate females to bear, with a courage amounting to heroism, the severest and most appalling operations.

Let me exhort you to ponder well on the truth and importance of what has now been urged, and let me hope, however much and extensively engaged in the various studies and duties of your profession, that

you will still devote some portion of your time to the performance of the duties of that religion which can alone enable you to sustain the various trials and difficulties which you may have to encounter, and can alone give a proper bias and direction to your conduct through life.

Suffer me yet to say a few words on the nature of *that conduct*; more especially with reference to the relation in which you will hereafter stand to one another. In no profession is mutual forbearance and honourable and charitable conduct towards one another more imperiously called for than in ours, which ought to be founded on the Christian feeling of universal charity and benevolence. If uncharitable, uncandid feeling, be ever excusable, it is in those whose temper has been soured by a long career of disappointment, and who have grown old in misfortune. But in youth, no possible apology can be offered for the indulgence of such a spirit, or for the betrayal of a censorious mind. To youth it particularly belongs to be generous in sentiment; candid in opinion; undesigning in behaviour; open to the most favourable construction of actions and conduct. Let me recommend you always to act towards each other and towards society at large with the strictest integrity. This one word, when rightly interpreted and understood, is most comprehensive. The man of integrity assumes no borrowed appear-

ance. He despises and abhors all little arts to raise himself and to depreciate others. In all his pursuits he knows no path but the fair and direct one, and would rather fail of success than attain it by reproachful means.

That such may be your conduct through life is my earnest hope. It may happen that for a while you may be circumvented by worldly wisdom, and may see less worthy men advancing more rapidly than yourselves, but let not this discourage you; let your motto be "*Ne cæde malis sed contra audentius ito.*" Persevere steadily in the course of integrity towards society and your professional brethren, and lasting reputation and honourable distinction cannot fail eventually to be your portion.

Suffer me, in conclusion, once more to earnestly recommend you to embrace every opportunity of observing and collecting original facts for yourselves. Remember the beautifully comprehensive lines of the Roman Satirist:

"*Segnius irritant animos demissa per aurem
Quam, quæ sunt oculis subjecta fidelibus,*"
and especially "*Quæ, ipse sibi tradit spectator.*"

To those who have leisure, I would add, let the midnight lamp be burnt to illuminate the stores of antiquity, that a brighter lustre may thence be thrown on the pages of modern learning.

To trace genius to its source, and see how she

has been influenced by the lore of past times, is both a pleasing and not unprofitable task. Full many of the boasted improvements of modern days, lie buried in the voluminous productions of our more industrious ancestors.

Once more let me endeavour to impress upon you, that the instructions conveyed to you in lectures, may be considered as valuable beacons for directing your course ; but, in the wide sea of practice you will often find yourselves deprived of their light, and unless early accustomed to investigate and act for yourselves, you will be wholly at a loss in any devious track into which you may be led. The doctrines taught in the schools, are necessary to establish the principles of medical science in your minds — but patient and laborious observation of original cases will alone fit you for the practice of the profession, and enable you to adapt the proper means to obtain the desired end.

In the course of this investigation you will often meet with disappointment, and will be obliged to abandon many pre-conceived notions and favourite theories, but let not this deter you from the pursuit of truth with patience, and above all with industry, the exertion of which is equally necessary to the man possessed of the greatest natural talent, as to him of less active genius ; for imagination is useless without knowledge. Nature gives in vain the

powers of combination, unless study and observation supply the materials to be combined. All natural good, every thing constitutional to man, needs man's industry to make it better. We receive it at the provident hand of Heaven, rather with capacity of being applied to our use, than immediately fit for our service. We receive it indeed, in full measure, but rude and unprepared.

“Pergite ergo adolescentes et in id studium, in quo estis incumbite; ut et vobis honori, et amicis emolumento, et reipublicæ utilitati esse possitis.”

